GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2330
ANSWERED ON:16.03.2017
Contaminated Drinking Water
Tharoor Dr. Shashi

Will the Minister of DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the right to water has been recognised as a Fundamental Right by the Supreme Court of India and again in the Model Bill on Groundwater and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether 3.42 lakh habitations are receiving inadequate drinking water and 59,881 habitations where quality of water is affected with contaminants like Arsenic, Fluoride, Iron according to the 23rd report of the Standing Committee of Rural Development and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether according to the Committee the funds are half of the proposed amount for rural drinking water and inadequate for attaining 50% rural coverage by 2017 and if so, the details thereof;

(d) if so, whether the Government has formulated any new plan for ensuring safe drinking water to each citizen and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether the Government would consider formulating Water Quality Index similar to Air Quality Index to inform citizens of quality of water being consumed and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE
IN THE MINISTRY OF DRINKING WATER & SANITATION
(SHRI RAMESH CHANDAPPA JIGAJINAGI)

(a) Supreme Court has interpreted that right to water is fundamental to life. However, Supreme Court has not recognized right to water as such as a fundamental right.

The current Model Bill to Regulate and Control the Development and Management of Ground water prepared and duly approved by Ministry of Water Resources in January 2005 does not recognize right to drinking water as a fundamental right.

(b) It is a fact that as per the 23rd report of the Standing Committee of Rural Development, there were 3.42 lakh partially covered habitations (receiving inadequate drinking water) and 59,881 water quality affected habitations as per the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) data as on 17/3/2016. This data is dynamic in nature and as per IMIS data as on 10/3/2017, there are now 3.30 lakh partially covered habitations and 64,094 water quality affected habitations. The State-wise break-up of partially covered habitations as on 10/03/3017 is at Annexure-I and the State-wise number of water quality affected habitations which are yet to be provided safe drinking water as on 10/3/2017 is at Annexure-II.

(c) The budgetary allocation under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) for the year 2017-18 is Rs 6,050 crore. However, the percentage of population covered with piped water supply in rural India as on 10/3/2017 is 53.52% and exceeded the target of 50% to be achieved by 2017.

(d) The centrally sponsored National Rural Drinking Water Programme continues to assist the States technically and financially in providing safe water. A new component of National Water Quality Sub-Mission has been added under NRDWP which aims at providing focused funding only to arsenic and fluoride affected rural population for providing safe drinking water preferably through surface water based piped water supply schemes. Funds required for enroute non-arsenic non-fluoride affected population has to be met out fully by the concerned State Government.

(e) The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India is not planning to introduce water quality index as a measure of pollution because safe drinking water has its own standard set by Bureau of Indian Standards in its IS-2010500-2012 and its subsequent amendments, which again has been derived taking help of the World Health Organization guidelines.

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